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OXC-3178
Copy 6 of 6

12 March 1962

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Status Report on OXCART - Western Suppliers and Operations

1. Operations 25X1A [redacted]

25X1A

a. The aircraft arrived safely and on schedule [redacted] on Wednesday, 28 February 1962. Work proceeded immediately on re-assembly and by Sunday control system and fuel system checks were underway. A small leak was found in the rudder boost system, but this was immediately cleared up and the controls and electrical systems checked out satisfactorily. It was immediately apparent, however, that the fuel system was in trouble with leaks turning up in all tanks. By Tuesday a full fuel check was made under operating pressure and to an observer it appeared that the aircraft was leaking everywhere, literally raining underneath. It was immediately defueled and the search for leaks started. By Wednesday it was determined that there were dozens of leaks per tank and that the [redacted] 25X1A tank sealer was failing to do the job. The sealing personnel were able to strip it out in long intact strips and it was apparent that it was not adhering to the metal structure. A tentative decision was made Wednesday night to strip the entire aircraft and reseal with 25X1A the [redacted] sealant. This was approved at a meeting with Kelly at Burbank Thursday morning.

The stripping and resealing will probably delay having the aircraft flight ready for six weeks. However, plans are being made to start taxi runs with fuel in #3 (sump) tank only, or in external tanks. This should enable us to taxi within three weeks.

25X1A b. [redacted] held a staff meeting at 8:30 Thursday morning for a complete briefing on administration, security, construction, and technical status at the base. There appear to be no serious loose ends other than technical at the moment. I gave them their first complete briefing on the status of the aircraft, both technical and schedule. I believe they are now in a better position to do their planning for base operations and training. As a result of the status 25X1A of the program, [redacted] is reconsidering his requirement for pilots and when they will come on board.

25X1C

c. The [redacted] has been operating very satisfactorily and on schedule.

2. A-12 Mfg. Status

a. On 26 February I stated that the #2 airframe was a month away from moving into the "C" mating jig and that #3 was moving well in the "A" jig and was gaining on #2. This status still remains and I believe that the predicted date that #2 moves to the "C" jig and #3 to the "B" jig is still good.

b. It now appears that there may be some improvement in the final assembly time since they are no longer using [redacted] as a sealer. 25X1A This should eliminate one of their biggest assembly headaches.

c. There is no further word on the status of general items of equipment and plumbing except that there will be no shortages for #2.

d. The parachute program is continuing at El Centro. Three live jumps were made last Friday, March 2, from low altitude and were satisfactory. 25X1A Two parachute rigs suitable for early flying were delivered [redacted] last week. The problem of the high speed drogue parachute is not as yet resolved, but is being worked on.

Three additional live jumps were made March 8 and four jumps in full pressure suit were scheduled March 9, but held up due to weather.

25X1A 3. [redacted]

25X1A [redacted] has apparently solved their last big problem which was the skin-pan banding. The delivery date of the static test article 25X1A of April 21 now looks good. [redacted] has assured us that the addition of three plys on each skin will not affect the AR characteristics of the fin.

25X1A 4. AR [redacted]

There has been no appreciable progress in the AR program at the 25X1A [redacted] They are still working on the design and loading of the spike and are still endeavoring to get an operational 70 mc. rig.

5. Conclusions:

a. The sealing problem on #1 will delay the ground and flight test programs three to six weeks.

b. #2 airframe will probably not be delivered before the end of August based on past and present progress.

c. The substitution of the [redacted] 25X1A eases the final assembly problem, but does not necessarily solve the sealing problem since it is not rated for as high a temperature as desired. I recommend an approach to the problem wherein we construct a typical titanium tank to which we can apply various sealant materials and test it under heat, pressure, and shake. This, it appears to me, is a more realistic approach to the problem. I would like to discuss this with you on my next trip to Washington.

25X1A SIGNED
[redacted]
Engineering Consultant
DB/DPD

25X1A
[redacted]/DPD:kmj (12 March 1962)

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